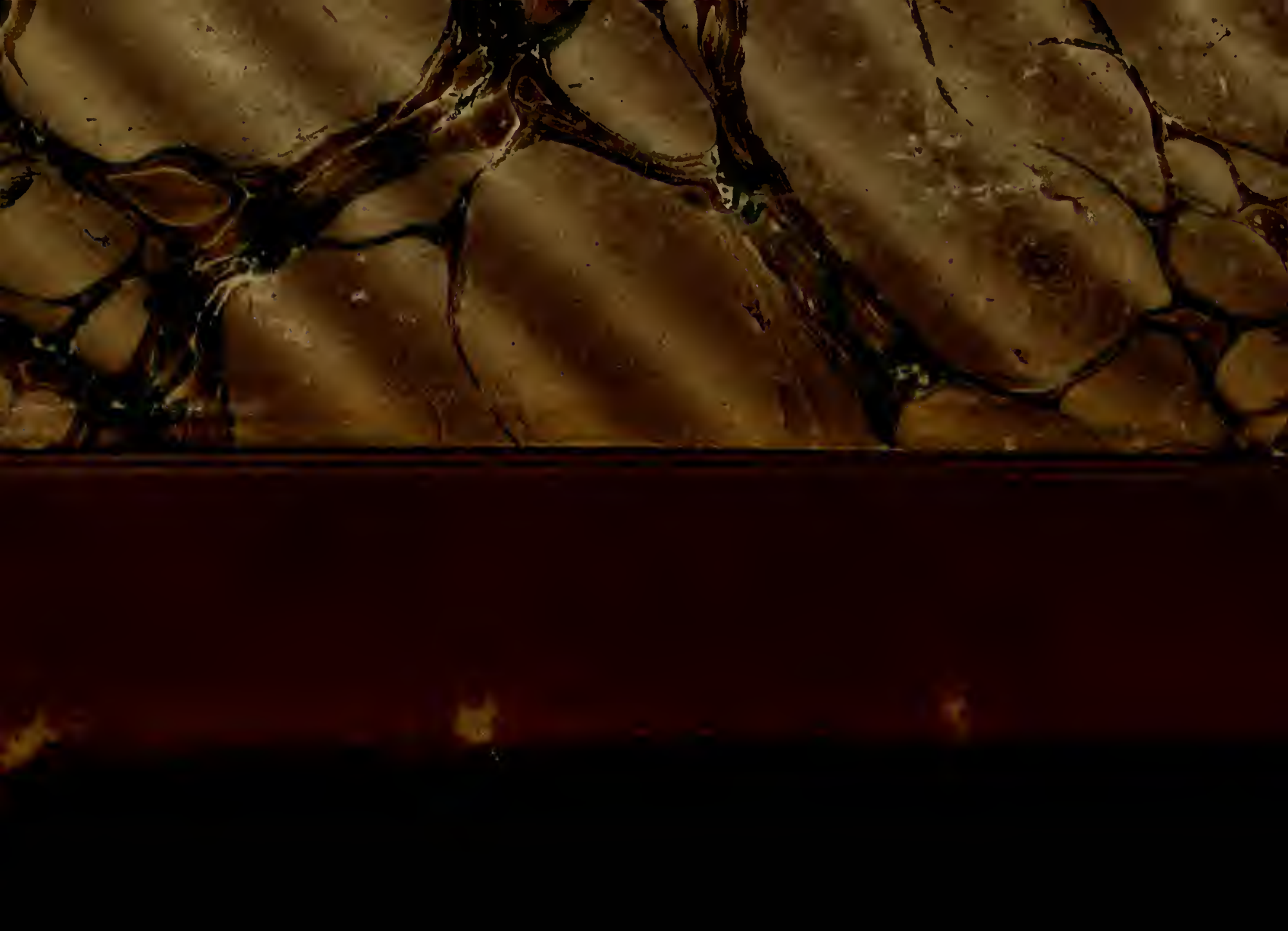

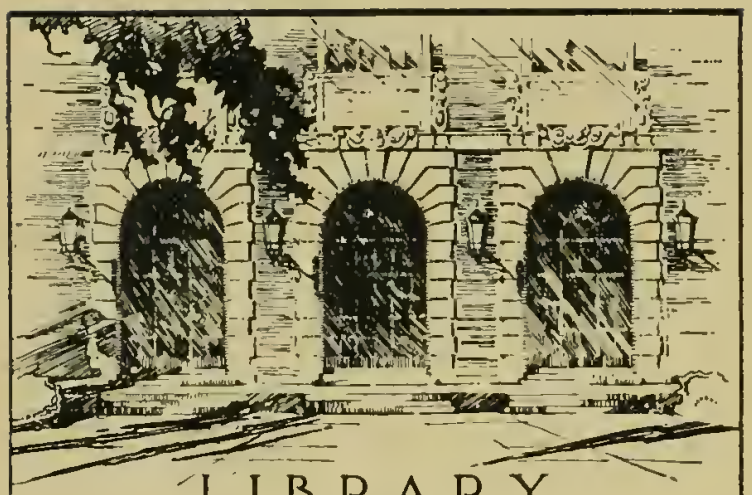

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WORK IN BRIGHTON

OR,

WOMAN'S MISSION TO WOMEN.

BY

ELLICE HOPKINS,

AUTHOR OF 'ACTIVE SERVICE,' 'WORK AMONG THE LOST,' ETC.

With a Preface

BY FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Twelfth Thousand, with Additions.

LONDON:

HATCHARDS, PICCADILLY.

1878.

'This is a people robbed and spoiled. They are all of them snared in holes, and hid in prison-houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith Restore.'—*Isa.* xlii. 22.

PREFACE TO NINTH EDITION.

FROM my own experience in long past years I am quite sure that the way, as indicated in *Work in Brighton*, is the only true way; and I would entreat the women of England to read the little book, and then judge, each for herself, how best to use that influence, never to be forgotten, lost, or set aside, of every pure woman in the cause—an influence which must one day tell for or against, whether she will or no. She cannot be neutral.

This is the cause, one would think, of every Englishwoman; for to every Englishwoman Home and Family, here imperilled, with or without her knowledge, have a sacred name; the cause of every wife and mother, for the happy wife and mother (as was truly said by one of

these) has the strongest reason to do something to help those who have no home and no happiness; the cause of God, who is the Father of the poor outcasts as well as of the happy homes.

In these holy names I beg you to look at this work. What is character given us for, but to help those who have none? I bid the work 'God speed' with all my heart, and soul, and strength.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

London, Oct. 1877.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

At the conclusion of a quarter of a century's work I have been led to feel that penitentiary-work, important and absolutely necessary as it is, can only undo the last link or two of a chain of evil to which fresh links are being added at the other end, by causes it leaves untouched. I have been led to feel that unless a radical change of feeling and attitude can be brought about in the educated women, and especially the mothers of England, as long as they insist on ignoring the subject, and therefore not exerting their legitimate influence, no real progress can be made to a better state of things; and therefore I gladly give to my friend's little book whatever weight may attach to my name.

I have come a long and toilsome way, and not many more years of labour may lie between me and my eternal rest, but if the many warm hearts who have befriended me and my work still ask what they can do for me, I answer, 'Read, and get others to read, this little book.' Do not read it hastily, but ponder its statements, the work of more than one mind, the result of many years of thought, prayer, and suffering, and see if you cannot, by home or social influence, by becoming one of an Association, by undertaking to distribute this little book among your friends, or by some other method, do something to help a cause which in the name of Home and Family should lie nearest and dearest to every woman's heart.

FANNY VICARS.

6 *Charlotte Street, Brighton,*
February, 1877.

WORK IN BRIGHTON;

OR,

WOMAN'S MISSION TO WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

WHILST we are sending missionaries to the uttermost parts of the earth, there is a mission close to our own doors which we women refuse to recognise, though only we can take it up; a mission to a 'land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as midnight;' to a people, in the words of the prophet, 'robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison-houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore;' to those,

fashioned like ourselves, speaking the same mother-speech, born in the same Christian land, yet sunk in worse than heathenism—a degradation to which many a heathen would point with scorn.

My attention was first called to the subject by reading some private journals of Sarah Robinson, the well-known worker among our soldiers.*

In 1864, Miss Robinson, being then in temporary charge of the Aldershot Military Mission Hall, was led to take an interest in the outcast women, who form one of the hideous concomitants of standing armies, with their enforced celibacy. She began her work among them by the usual agency—a midnight meeting—of which in her private journal she gives the following account :—

'We got the tea ready for ten o'clock; the two Bible women were to help in the Hall, and Mr. Michael was to be in the streets to bring in any he could find and persuade to come. About thirty girls came. Nearly all were the worse for drink, and it took an hour's tea-drinking to get them sober and fit to listen. Whilst Mr. Michael

* See a little shilling book, called *Active Service*, Twentieth thousand. (Hatchards.)

was speaking to them they kept slipping out, on one pretence and another, till only a dozen remained; and one of these went into a fit and made a long interruption; and another also became faint and hysterical, and the Bible-women were wholly occupied with smelling salts and cold water. I found it quite hopeless to expect the girls to listen to what was being said, so tried to speak separately to a few. One girl greatly interested me; she is well educated and lady-like, the daughter of a ——shire magistrate. She had come in, not to tea, but entirely out of curiosity, to see if any lady really would notice such girls, as she had supposed Mr. Michael was joking when he spoke to her in the streets. I took her alone and talked to her just like a sister. She told me all her history; but though she seemed quite to love me for my interest in her, I could not get her to go into the Refuge; she said she should soon go mad, for she dared not let herself think. I spoke most earnestly to her of the end; she knew everything, but said it was too late, and all I could tell her of the love of Jesus, and His power to save to the uttermost, was of no use. The only thing

that seemed to touch her was my caring for her; so I pressed that point, and begged her to let me be her friend, even if she continued as she was. She promised to meet me next day, Sunday, and go with me on my usual visit to the Refuge, and I promised no one should know who she was. When I shook hands with her at parting, she looked at me and thanked me with tears in her eyes. I talked with four others; altogether we hoped to gain seven girls from the evening meeting; they made appointments to see Mr. Michael and myself, and go with us to the Refuge. The next day not one made their appearance.'

In consequence of this apparent total failure of the midnight meeting, Miss Robinson was led to turn her whole attention to morning and afternoon visitation of the dens where these poor creatures congregate. At that time they herded together in colonies, as many as a hundred inhabiting a row of small tenements, all communicating with one another internally, by means of passages, and named after the public-house which generally formed the corner house; a state of things which I am thankful to say no longer exists.

Miss Robinson thus describes in her journal her first attempt at penetrating into these dens:

'I was very foolish about going into the girls' rooms. I walked up and down praying for strength, and feeling wretchedly incapable and without self-control. Even the people in the low lodging-houses advised me not to venture, as I should certainly be insulted. At last I dashed into it, and found it really not so very difficult. Most of the girls were not up; nearly all, after their first surprise, received me kindly. One poor creature, Lizzie, I found in tears; she is ill, and fears she will die; I talked and prayed with her; she clung to me as if I could save her, and I promised to come again. Nearly one hundred girls live in this "Shamrock," two in each room,—chums, as they are called, girls of all grades, some shockingly diseased. I then visited the infirmary to ask where the girls there came from, and so got directed to other dens, and spent most of the day in going amongst them. I could not write down, I cannot even bear to think of, the horrible things I saw and heard; but I only met with unkindness in one place, where the women who were ironing

would have burnt me with a hot iron if I had stayed.'

With regard to the two modes of working—midnight meetings and visitation of dens—Miss Robinson says, 'I should always prefer the morning work, when the drink is out of them, and their time is heavy on their hands. At night they are dressed up, half drunk, eager to be after their wretched gains; in the morning everything is real about them, no glitter, no illusion, no self-deception, no excitement, but real misery, pain, remorse, and the words you say are more likely to be felt as real too. I have no doubt much of what took place in the Hall last night seems to the girls a dream this morning. God helping me, I will work among them by day in future.'

And nobly was the resolve fulfilled. Once more to quote from her journal: 'When I look back on the work among these poor girls, it seems almost miraculous to me. Now I can go into any of the dens, and wherever they are herding, I have only to mention my name to bring them all round me; while I am talking to them, they seem to become softened and womanly again, quite different

creatures. If I met that horrid customary stare now, I know at once it is a new girl who does not know me. Such a number come in with every fresh regiment, the town is overflowing with them; and if there is a hell upon earth it is the streets of Aldershot of a night. No one can imagine it; they may think they can, but it is impossible. It is an infernal carnival. I have felt it so good that we cannot go beyond Christ's "uttermost," and I am very sure He would not have sent the message by me into these dens without meaning something by it. Whether I see results or not, I am quite satisfied His word carried there will not be in vain. Lately I have become quite hardened physically to the work, and the joy I feel in it is quite divine; no other word can express it; it is in one sense entering into the joy of my Lord. As to the natural aptitude for this work, as far as I can see, it consists in straightforwardness and strength, as well as kindness. These poor things feel, when not excited with drink, so utterly forlorn and helpless that they want to lean on some one. I try to work on this, and get them to cast themselves cn the Saviour.'

So many did Miss Robinson rescue, and such terrible cases, that at last she was actually requested to desist, as the Refuge could no longer bear the medical expenses.

After reading the above experience, I was so forcibly impressed that this was the right agency for reaching outcast women, that I naturally became exceedingly anxious to try if it could be set on foot in Brighton. Often and often I talked it over with Mrs. Vicars, whose work in connexion with the Albion Hill Home is so well known ;* but being then both of us invalids, no way seemed to open ; and all we could do was to pray earnestly and in faith, casting our care upon Him who cares for those whom man rejects—the great Brother of the lost and the outcast.

At length the prayer was answered by two clergymen's wives, one of whom, the wife of the chaplain of the Albion Hill Home, afterwards became the valued Lady Superintendent of our Association, undertaking the work quite independently of us, and without knowing how

* See *Work among the Lost*, 1*s.* 6*d.* 16th Thousand. (Hatchards.)

earnestly we had been praying for it; and to them belongs the joy of having been the first fairly to set the work on foot.

For some weeks I only met them for prayer. But soon finding myself stronger, as a thank-offering for returning health, I offered to go in the place of Mrs. S., who was confined to the house with a bad cold.

I shall never forget my first visit. We had prayed earnestly, even with tears, before going. After visiting one or two rooms together, my companion left me alone with four girls, while she went to find out another in the same house, whom she was seeking. 'That girl,' said one of them, pointing to a young thing of sixteen, 'is not one of us: she's only just come in.' At once I crossed over the room, sat down close beside her, laid my hand on her shoulder, and pleaded with her as I think I never pleaded with a human being before, to come away with me *at once*, and let me save her from this horrible life. It was like dashing myself against a dead wall, for any impression my words seemed to make on any of the four. At last I exclaimed, 'Girls, I can't stand this. I can't touch

your hearts, but there's One who can. You must kneel down and pray with me.'

Rather to my surprise they all knelt down, and I prayed. Praying? It was more like shedding one's life-blood for them, in one's utter sense of helplessness to save from worse than death.

The door had not been closed two seconds behind me, as I left, when I heard shrieks of horrid laughter from all four, and fragments of indecent jests, which I in vain strove not to hear.

I went home literally bruised and bleeding. My prayer seemed to have gone no higher than the ceiling.

'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' Two days after, I heard that that young girl had come away the next day of her own accord, and gone straight up to the Home. She was motherless, and had gone astray for only a few weeks; she is now doing well, and will, I hope, be a happy, respectable little servant.

In three weeks between us we have rescued seven. One girl, whom we had never seen, came away simply from hearing that ladies were visiting

the dens, and thus realising that there were some Christian hearts who did not despise their lost sisters.

The work that thus began in this forlorn little seed of life has since prospered and spread. A number of ladies have formed themselves into an Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, and undertake to visit the Brighton dens once a-week, a certain number being portioned out to every pair of visitors. Once a-month we meet for earnest, united prayer, and to discuss any difficult cases or perplexities that may have arisen—and in this work they are always many—meeting at one another's houses; so that each lady may have the opportunity of asking some of her own friends to attend the meeting, by this means spreading an interest in the work, and enlisting fresh workers. Once a quarter we receive the Holy Communion together at the little Home Chapel.

Finding that we overcrowded and unsettled the Home by placing the girls we had rescued there till their cases could be inquired into; finding, too, that we were constantly stopped for want of room, as well as from many of the girls objecting to go at

once into a Home; Mrs. Vicars, with her accustomed faith and energy, set to and raised the funds to build a Cottage Home, which has proved invaluable in the work.

The work already accomplished by our Association, even though still in its infancy, is simply marvellous. The mere presence of pure women seems to act like a spell, letting in forgotten fresh air and sunshine into these dark places of the earth that are so full of cruelty. Even the keepers of the dens respond to the better influences which they have been so long without, and are often led to turn with loathing against their vile trade—one man having made up his mind to give up five houses that he rented. Some streets have been wholly purged of this evil; and even the street where these poor wanderers chiefly congregate is quite a changed place. Seven of the houses are closed, and have turned into respectable dwellings —and let it be remembered that every such house is a centre for propagating and multiplying vice, sending out its evil emissaries to catch the thoughtless and unwary of both sexes—and there are no longer the same disgraceful rows, and loud-tongued

obscenity, which once made it a perfect pandemonium.

But though these are the general results of our visiting, it is the individual cases that have been rescued, with all their unspeakable sadness and friendlessness, that constitute our most precious reward.

CHAPTER II.

BUT perhaps you are all the time asking, 'Why should I undertake this mission? What are the decided advantages of this plan to induce me to undertake such repulsive work? Why cannot we go on as we have been doing? I subscribe to a Home; I provide these poor, wretched girls with the means of rescue; and if they don't avail themselves of it, that is their fault not mine. I don't see I am called to meddle any further with a subject I have always made a point of avoiding.' 'You don't mean to say,' said one lady to me, 'you go amongst those poor, wretched, degraded

creatures? Why, I should shrink from the defilement of their mere presence. I should feel polluted by going into such places.'

Now I ask first, Is this feeling right? Have we any right to it in God's sight? Let us put it plainly to ourselves; if we had been born, like many of those we despise, in a back street, if our earliest sight had been a father coming home drunk, our earliest sound an oath, the earliest talk around us, things of which we in our sheltered girlhood did not even know the existence of, which of us could stand up and say, I should have been just what I am now, I should have been pure? And if to us was given a pure sheltered girlhood, screened from every breath of evil, oh! if there be a just God above us, must not our pure homes and happy wedded love be given us as a trust for the unhappy and the impure? Are they not given us as a vantage-ground from which to feel for their misery and go forth to them, embodying for them the blessedness of purity and home, till they are led to long after better things, and they too are brought into the fold of Eternal Love? when by the very misery and pri-

vation and even sin of their lives,* they may pass upwards, as they tread that dark flight of steps underfoot to heights we have not reached. I have seen it. Men and women I have picked out of the gutter of sin and degradation, to whom my love, my purity, my happy peace, first made possible the love, the purity, the peace of heaven, I have seen them pass me by, and attain, through the sorrow and the misery of the past, to heights of holiness and depths of self-devotion, which were utterly beyond me, and they in their turn have had to help me to 'come up higher.' Have we not, I ask, dislocated this divine order? Have we not laid selfish hands on our home-happiness, forgetting its high purpose as a divine promise for all sad and darkened souls? Have we not laid self-righteous claim to our purity, which is so emphatically 'not our own;' but bought with such a price of human toil, and lavish love, and costly refinement, and sheltered grace, that we might spend it for the life of the world? Have we not made idols of these pure homes of ours; carefully curtaining out the thought

* 'To whom much has been forgiven, the same loveth much.'

of the lost, as inconsistent with our purity; and leaving our outcast sister to perish, unhelped, uncared for, at their doors, with arms outstretched in infinite appeal, to which none answers? And may not this purity, which thus worships and cares for itself as its own idol-end, be the worst impurity in God's sight, who seeth not as man sees? an idol white and comely, as the fair marble idols of old, but with feet that cannot hasten to the rescue, with eyes stone-blind to our lost sister's sin and degradation, with hands that refuse to deliver them who in all fearful senses are 'drawn unto death.' And may not the Judge who standeth before the door say again of our self-righteousness as He said of the Pharisees of old, 'Behold, the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you?'

But again, let us clearly realise the position of these poor lost children. A girl in a fit of giddiness stays out too late with a flighty companion, and is afraid to go home and encounter the harsh scolding that awaits her. Or she has broken down from over-work in her last situation, and ill and weak, and with a dread of hard work upon her, flies in a fit of desperation to the only life where she thinks

she can do as she likes. Or, perhaps, she has given her heart to a man whom she loved, 'not wisely but too well.' Or, once again, her mother is dead, and she has got a step-mother, and a home where she is not wanted. If from any of these, the most common causes, a girl in an evil moment enters a den, she is practically LOST. As a rule no Christian foot crosses that threshold, no clergyman, no district visitor, no Scripture-reader; no Bible or Prayer-book is ever seen, no token that there is a God above; her own mother does not know where she is; no one ever approaches her but to do her harm. If she hears of a Home, it is from girls who have left it to go back to a life of sin, and whose interest it is to represent it as a dreary dungeon. And degraded and shame-stricken as she is, especially before she has had time to get hardened to the life, how can she ever show her face among strangers, or brave the jeers and taunts and persuasions of her companions? Only one comforter remains to her, *the drink*, and to that she too surely flies. And I do say it is positive cruelty and hard-heartedness for Christian women to say they have done their part in subscribing to a

Home for these poor lost children, when a moment's real thought will show us that the stone that shuts them up in their living grave is too heavy for them to move; and we only mock them by offering them places of safety from which a dead weight of evil cuts them off. No one can fully realise their extreme helplessness to save themselves, even with a well-managed Home close at hand, till one has seen it for oneself; a helplessness greatest at first, when their shame is deepest, and when there is the most hope of them, could they only be rescued. Can a girl only be rescued before she has been more than a few days or weeks in evil, no evil habit has been formed, and the task of her reformation is comparatively easy, the difficulty increasing with the length of time she remains in degradation, not in an arithmetical but geometrical ratio. Can we then, I ask, name the name of Christ, and refuse them the only thing which in most cases can save them—to go, like the good Samaritan, *where they are*, and clasp a strong sister's hand in theirs and drag them out of the mire into which they have fallen?

One of our first cases will perhaps best illus-

trate the truth of what I say. I give it, not because it is uncommon, but as typical of thousands of others. A. B. was a child of fifteen when she was led astray by her master, an educated gentleman. She loved him intensely, and, oh, remember that, whilst a man falls by that which is lowest in him, a woman often falls by that which is highest in her, her longing to sacrifice her best to him whom she loves:

> And all life's loveliest they know
> But as the thing that wrought their woe!
> To shame by flights of angels sung,
> By Hope bright-handed led to wrong,
> By Joy to anguish tricked forlorn,
> By Faith to bitter death foresworn,
> By Love a poisoned chalice given,
> 'Drink thou and live and enter heaven:'
> Who, yielding up to him her soul,
> Drank deep and died—Love's bitter dole.

After a year or so, in which he kept her in luxury, he tired of his plaything, and deserted her. What was this desolate, penniless child to do? They told her, 'You must do as we do; you are no better than us. You must go on the streets.' A single Christian hand held out to her would

have saved her, for she loathed the life; but no ladies then visited the dens, and, 'behold, we knew it not.' I can only say, that twice that girl, to escape the misery of her life, tried to fling herself off the pier-steps into the sea,

> Mad from life's history,
> Glad to death's mystery
> Swift to be hurled,
> Anywhere—anywhere out of the world.

Twice she was caught by a policeman, and threatened with the world's great charity, the lock-up, if she attempted to escape again from her degradation. Often she would sit for hours, her young head bowed upon her arms, weeping desolately; and when asked what was the matter, she would wail out, 'Oh, that I had some friend who would get me out of this life!' At last, thank God, our Ladies' Association was formed, and Mrs. S. and myself visited her. Some hindrances prevented her from coming off with us then, but her landlady, knowing that she would escape from her the next time, and fearing to lose her great gains, locked her up every time we came into the streets. At length we had a midnight meeting in connexion

with our work. The poor child was, of course, let out at night. She heard of it, she entered the room, and the first person she saw was one of the ladies who had visited her. She simply walked straight up to her and gave herself up, body and soul, with one cry, 'Save me!' She was taken to the Home, and is now a respectable servant, engaged to be married, and doing well, having shown herself thoroughly virtuous under very strong temptations.

Do not tell me it needs a peculiar gift to do this work. It seems to me we talk so much of gifts now-a-days that we have forgotten that one gift of gifts, that 'cometh down from the Father of lights, who giveth liberally,'—the gift of simple, soul-saving earnestness, which 'can do all things through Christ strengthening'—the only gift I ever hear St. Paul speak about, when a lost soul is to be saved.

One of our workers—a lady with a large family, and many pressing calls on her time and energies, but who yet makes a point of giving up an hour or two every week to the care of these poor lost motherless children—in a letter to me

says, 'To those who regard this work as one in which very few are fitted to engage, and who, by way of deterring me from undertaking it, bring so many difficulties to bear upon it, I often say that "work among the lost" is just like a spectre, or some other optical delusion, which, existing in the imagination only, and formidable in the distance, vanishes when one comes up with it face to face; remembering that difficulties are overcome, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."' It needs no gift beyond a love for the Saviour of the lost, and those motherly compassions which God has implanted in every woman's heart. Least of all, need we produce a marriage certificate before we can save our perishing sisters. Any woman, *not too young*, married or unmarried, can do it.

Form an Association of Ladies, and the work falls lightly on the individual members; one or two hours a-week are enough, as a rule; and the busiest can and ought to undertake it.

Let there, I say, be no longer in all our large towns these recognised slaughter-houses for women, which we call dens; recognised so far that it is an

understood thing that no Christian foot should visit them, and that ladies should pass them by in their districts. In every large town there are scores of these houses set apart for the destruction of women ; and yet we educated Christian women quietly recognise this state of things, because it is not *our* daughters that are sacrificed, and therefore we make no stir.

Perhaps you will say I have no right to call them 'slaughter-houses,' that women go voluntarily into them, and not like the poor beasts that are driven blindfold to their fate. Do you know *whom* we find in these dens? Do you know that we find motherless *children*, with faces as young and fair as that girlish face you kiss in its sweet innocence in your own home? Do you know that we have had children with their short sleeves and pretty childish pinafores brought to the door of our Home from a den? Do you realise that a very large proportion of them are children under twenty-one?—they mostly die before they are thirty.

On one occasion a child of sixteen escaped to Mrs. Vicars. 'Oh,' she said, in reply to some questions of Mrs. Vicars, 'Mother H.'—think of them

calling the old hag that keeps the den, 'mother,' with a piteous bleat of their orphan lips—'Mother H. takes all our money.'

'What does she do for you, then?' inquired Mrs. Vicars.

'Oh, she keeps us in dress, and paint, and gin.'

A child of sixteen!

And we Christian women pass by the door where children are kept in dress, and paint, and gin, and vice, as unfit for our purity to enter, and yet call ourselves by the name of Christ.

Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions.

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

And lay not this sin to our charge.

CHAPTER III.

LET me endeavour to meet some of the objections which at present make so many of us educated women hide our heads, like the foolish ostrich, in desert sand, and refuse to look at the subject at all.

Perhaps with many others, you rest your refusal on the authority of those about you. Your husband, or your father, or the man whose judgment you most trust, tells you you know nothing about it, and it is a subject that every nice-minded woman had much better let alone.

Only, unfortunately, God's word says: 'If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth *thy* soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?'

Which are we to obey, God or man?

Or is it that you hold, with a lady I was talking with a few days ago, 'that these poor creatures

never can be really reclaimed; they are rescued for a time, but they always go back sooner or later?' Now I can only earnestly say to you in Mrs. Vicars' name, who has had five-and-twenty years' experience of them, and therefore must know, that this is a phantom of your own brain, a prejudice born of ignorance. As in intemperance, many doubtless do go back, but we do not therefore say the drunkard cannot be reclaimed. Mrs. Vicars calculates that of those who have been received into her Home, one in five goes back; that is, twenty go wrong where eighty go right in every hundred, surely not a very hopeless result to work for, especially as they are, as a rule, girls whose lives have been beset by bad conditions — bad parents, bad examples, bad training, bad associates. And I can only ask you, in your comparative ignorance, to yield to her knowledge, a quarter of a century's personal experience on the widest scale, and resolutely to dismiss this prejudice from your mind as baseless in fact.

But perhaps you say, 'I am told that this class of women must exist, for the preservation of the purity of our homes, wherever, as in a civilised

country, marriage is deferred.' If this be so, I can only say, let us at least be honest about it. If we have to offer such an iniquitous sacrifice on the altar of our homes,—if, indeed, they rest on so impure a basis, do not let us do as the heathens did when they had to offer a milk-white bull to Jupiter, chalk out the black spots. For Heaven's sake, let us fling away the chalk, and not add hypocrisy to uncleanness. Let us have the parsonage on the one side of the church and the den on the other; on the one side the preachers of purity, on the other the martyrs of purity; and for my part, my heart goes with the martyrs: it is so easy to preach, it is so hard, so inexpressibly hard, to suffer and be degraded. But, above all, let us honestly acknowledge that Christianity, with its pure homes and its enthronement of woman as the divine mother, has resulted in a devil's worship, to which that of Moloch was as nothing. Moloch did but destroy the poor perishing body; but this worship of Home exacts the destruction of countless women, in soul and body both.

But I shame myself, I shame our common womanhood; merely to utter the monstrous theory

is enough. It needs no refutation. Something divine within us, something higher than mere logic, rises up in wrath, and cries, 'It is not so. I refuse to accept life on such conditions; I would die rather.' There can be no 'must' in evil, only a terrible 'may be,' and against that we have to war and fight.

But if you cannot trust the divine within you, judge the tree by its fruits, and see if the sin of our indifference has not already found us out. Has not the existence of this class poisoned our national health? Has it not blighted, is it not blighting, the lives of thousands of innocent mothers and babes? How much of the madness that crowds our asylums is due to it? How much infanticide? How much of the disease and blindness of our children? How many are born with inherited vicious tendencies? Is not the axe already laid to the root of a tree that bears such fruit as this? And whatever the solution of our difficult social problems may be, is this not proved by the remorseless logic of facts to be the wrong one?

But it is not only nor chiefly the physical results that are the bane. If I were asked what is one of

the great causes of immorality amongst us, I should say at once, the existence of an outcast class among us. Do we, I ask, sufficiently realise the existence in the very heart of our so-called Christian civilisation of this outcast class—an outcast class kept up, let us remember, quite as much by the feeling of pure men and women as by the impure? That in Paris alone, Père Hyacinthe stated in St. James's Hall, there are 150,000 of these moral outcasts; in London alone it is said there are 70,000 to 80,000. Some say that this is a gross exaggeration; but when one remembers that London has treble the population of Paris, and that the number given is only half the number of outcasts, would to God one could feel quite sure that it is a gross exaggeration! Where an outcast class exists in the form of negro slaves, we see clearly enough that it produces and breeds the cruelty, the laziness, the licentiousness of which at first it was the victim. We refuse to see it when the outcast class are among ourselves in the form of lost women. Yet, I have no hesitation in saying that not one young man in a hundred would be guilty of dragging a pure girl down, and fewer still but would allow the detestable

wickedness of it. But once let a woman belong to this outcast class, and sin against her becomes no sin in his eyes. It does not make her lost; she *is* lost. If she is willing to earn her bread, without a character she cannot get employment. Sin against her is no sin, but a way of providing her with the means of livelihood; the very nature of it is disguised by the fact of her being an outcast, cut off from earning her own bread by honest work.

Now what I want women to do is to rise up in a body and say, We will not have this outcast class among us. We will no more hear of an outcast woman than an enslaved woman. Do not misunderstand me: I am not asking you to think lightly of the sin of unchastity in a woman. We do not think lightly of the sin of intemperance, yet we do not make drunkards into an outcast class; we do not think it degrades us to talk to a drunkard or to show him kindness, nor do we think we commit an act of impropriety in going to his house, or even following him into the public-house. I do not want you to take an unreclaimed woman from the streets into your service, any more than I want you to make an unreclaimed drunkard your coach-

man. What I do want you to do is to break down the artificial distinction between this and all other sins, and treat her, and act towards her, and feel towards her, as a sister, even as you would treat the drunkard as a brother.

My sisters, I say it urgently and solemnly, we have let men impose their views on us too long on this subject. We must act and think for ourselves, remembering what we have too long forgotten, that if to men have been given the bodily strength and the intellectual pre-eminence, it is the woman who is the conscience of the world; it is to us women that God has intrusted the moral training of the young, and therefore of humanity; and for us, therefore, slavishly to adopt the views of men on moral points, is as disastrous as it would be for men to adopt our physical weakness or our want of intellectual training and knowledge.

Take the parallel of literature. We are shocked at the impurity of French novels. But we forget that French novels are written mainly for a public of men; nice-minded women are not, as a rule, expected to read them. What is the result of the withdrawal of the influence of women? Why, a

French novel. But let women form a recognised part of the reading public, and at once a rise in moral tone takes place—the rise that marks George Eliot's works in comparison to George Sand's. Bring in the yet stronger influence of women, and we get the yet greater purity of American literature. Society, as at present constituted, is the French novel; women are not expected to know what goes on; their legitimate influence is not, and cannot, therefore, be exerted. But when women insist on knowing—refuse to acquiesce any longer in the babyish ignorance that unfits them for the care of their own sons—may not precisely the same rise in purity take place in society as we see already in literature?

Let us begin, I say, by forming Associations of Ladies for the care of Friendless Girls. Some such concrete expression of our responsibility towards our lost sisters will react upon ourselves better than any words. Let us no longer recognise for one moment these dens, set apart for the destruction of our sisters, but freely enter into them, and claim them for the Saviour of the lost. For is not the very essence of Christianity just this, that the king-

dom of God *is* come, and that now every spot of God's earth can and ought to be claimed for Him and His Christ? Let us not send paid agents, but *go ourselves*. 'I don't want you,' exclaimed a poor outcast girl, bursting out into that horrid laughter which is so emphatically not mirth. 'Get along with you; what good can you do me?' Suddenly she became quite grave, and said, 'No; I don't mean that. I *do* believe there is something in you ladies coming into such places as this, after the likes of us. In them midnight meetings there is so much preaching and excitement, and of course the men are all paid for it. But now with you ladies it is different. If anything can be done with us, it'll be by you ladies visiting us like this.'

Let us refuse to recognise them for one moment as an outcast class, set apart for destruction; let us prove, by our kindly intercourse and helpful sympathy, that they are not; and let us teach men that there is no more a lost woman on God's redeemed earth than a lost man; and that when they yield to temptation they destroy a woman with a hopeful future and loving hands held out to help her, not merely support an outcast who is lost

already. And believe me, men will respond, and gradually—not all at once, but slowly and surely—they will rise to the level of the Christ in us, instead of our sinking to the level of the animal in them.

But perhaps some who are already working in connexion with one of our over-crowded Homes will say, 'We have already, from want of room, to turn away many who come, what is the use of setting on foot an agency to rescue more, when already we cannot accommodate those who come of their own free will?' I answer, Because the rescue of individual cases does not touch the causes, but only saves the last link that comes from the forge. But bring the influence of pure women to bear on the dens of our large cities, and in a great measure you put a stop to the forge itself. There is much that goes on with impunity in safe and secret darkness that *cannot* go on in the light. The mere fear of exposure will stop it; the mere sense that it is likely to come to the knowledge of women in good social position would act as a deterrent. You cannot close these houses by legal force—to do so, except in cases where they are greatly in excess, is useless, at any rate till a great and general rise in

moral feeling takes place ; as things are, you only drive the disease deeper into the social system, and it is certain to break out with increased virulence elsewhere. You have done nothing towards its cure. A moral evil must be met by moral means. But I repeat, let one such house be closed by the force of Christian love and moral suasion (and our Association has closed many), and you have got rid of a centre for the propagation and multiplication of vice, and saved numbers of both sexes from being ensnared.

Do you still cry, 'But it is so hopeless ; this class has always existed, and always will exist?' Why? Slavery was once universally thought necessary ; but all Christian nations have now abandoned the practice of slavery. It was once thought universally necessary to inflict stripes and chains on the lunatic ; but now any Christian nation would feel itself disgraced by allowing such treatment. Gambling-houses were once thought a necessary evil ; now the common moral sense is against them, and they are put down. Why should we hastily conclude that the evil which inflicts the greatest degradation, and misery, and disease, and

that too on a woman, is alone eternal? Why should not the moral murder of a woman come to be looked upon in the same light as the murder of her body only? I am not speaking of ordinary immorality, such as exists in our villages and in all low states of society, but of professional vice, which *is quite a distinct thing* and a far deeper violation of nature — I must earnestly ask my reader not to confuse between the two—the existence of a recognised class set apart for destruction; and it is this, I contend, that is no more a necessary and eternal evil than slavery. Every great movement against evil has begun in a minority of one. Some men and women have been found with sufficient high courage to trust the naked affirmations of their moral sense; affirmations however, divinely enforced from without by the misery, the degradation, the disease, that God has wrapped up with every accepted evil, and to which they can always appeal as a proof that the thing is wrong, —a dynamic force, for ever slowly accumulating, till at last mankind is compelled to feel that the abuse is intolerable, and in its fall by its own weight of evil, humanity is raised to a higher level, in which

the old things have passed away, and behold, all things are made new. More and more we are coming to see, outside Christianity as well as within, that man is an organic whole; that we are members of one body, and that each member can only secure its own true healthful life by living not for itself, but for the whole; and that no member can be dishonoured and sacrificed without the whole body suffering from it. If in the fall of slavery, mankind has been raised to a higher level of freedom, in which he recognises the sanctity of the individual, and the brotherhood of man, may not this other great world-evil exist to teach us in a yet closer and direr form what it is to sacrifice another to our selfishness, and in its ultimate fall to raise man to the level of a purity which is love, and a chastity which is service?

I know in arguing thus, I go against the opinion of some medical men. But, apart from the fact that the medical profession is divided on the point —some maintaining the necessity of this great evil, and others as strongly maintaining the contrary—I would ask, Have the dicta of medical men proved so universally true, that we should give them that

almost superstitious credence which the British mind is apt to accord to what a doctor says, even when it conflicts with the dictates of our own conscience? Once the practice of bleeding was universally thought advisable; now it is as universally condemned as harmful. Once the medical profession prescribed alcoholic drinks in large quantities; now the profession is coming more and more to the conclusion that such drinks, not to be harmful, must be used in the greatest moderation. At the very time that the Quakers were introducing the mild treatment of the insane, the great medical authority, Dr. Cullen, was advising severity, and in some instances flogging, as necessary for the treatment of insanity. May there not be one or two other things which the medical profession has yet to grow out of under the influence of an enlarged and enlightened public opinion?

But, taking the medical opinion at its very worst, what does it amount to? Not that all health is impossible to a young man as a celibate, but only the highest perfection of health. But to how many things do young men sacrifice the highest perfection of health already, without a

thought and without an effort? To hard work or hard reading, to ambition and the exigencies of a career; to late hours and convivial habits; to an over-love of boating or athletics, &c. Is it possible that, after nineteen centuries of Christianity and civilisation, we have emerged so little from savage life as to hold that a woman's degradation in body and soul is of less account than each and all of these? *Cannot* we teach our sons the rascality of purchasing the highest physical well-being, or mere selfish pleasure, for themselves, by the moral sacrifice of another, and that other a *woman*—too often a starving woman, whose necessities they basely take advantage of—purchasing it on conditions which involve the existence of an immense class set apart to moral and physical destruction? Verily there is a saving one's life which is a losing it to all eternity.

What the *real* results are to health, apart from mere medical opinion, recent legislation has but too painfully taught us.

Still, perhaps, you plead that as things are now, in rescuing one poor girl you only make room for another who must be got to fill her place, and

where's the good? Now this is both the deepest and the shallowest objection. The shallowest as against work. The same argument applies equally to reclaiming a young thief. The master thief will certainly look out for another likely lad to train in evil, in the place of the one rescued. Yet no one urges it against saving our street Arabs. And in the work we are speaking of this plausible sophism is especially false. Let us remember that temptation does not come only from men, as is sometimes supposed; but that these poor lost creatures, with whomsoever the blame of their first dragging down may rest, are the worst seducers to sin, many young men being just as much led astray as young girls, and that in this case lessening the supply must lessen the demand, and diminish prevailing immorality. There is no fixed number of these dens that must be kept constantly filled; any house may turn into a den, and turn back into a respectable house; the immorality of a town can be just as much lessened as its intemperance.

But it is impossible to deny that practically this is the deepest of all objections. There is no question that this evil cannot be attacked from one side

only, that rightly to deal with it, there must be a corresponding moral advance of both sexes, or the old evils will only give place to new. But here again we women have the key of the position, if only we can be awakened to a sense of our responsibilities. For it is to the influence of mothers that we must chiefly look for a better state of things.

I appeal to every mother of sons. Are not Père Hyacinthe's words true, that if, in the divine order of things, the man is the head of the woman, the woman is the heart of the man? and whilst his heart is corrupt, whilst young men come into familiar contact with desecrated womanhood, I ask you, can they realise their own manhood? In Frederick Robertson's words, there are two great rocks in a man's life, on which he must either anchor or split—God and woman; and I cannot believe in the existence of any mother worthy the name, who can refuse to use her influence and teaching as a beacon to save from shipwreck, and guide into the haven where the rock becomes a shelter from the storm. I believe that if mothers do refuse to stretch out saving hands to

their own sons, it is because, while longing to save, they don't know how.

Now what I would suggest is amiss in the teaching of men, for one thing, is, that we leave them with no higher ground on which to overcome than self-restraint. Talk to an average steady young man, and what will he tell you? 'That he knows how to take care of himself;' he has never been taught that what he has to do far more, is to take care of the weakest and the most sinful woman that comes in his path. His parents, if they warn him at all, and do not leave him to go unwarned and unarmed into the world, without even the most ordinary knowledge of the facts of his own body, and his relations to the world he lives in, warn him against the strange woman; not a word is said to him about the strange woman being his lost sister whom he has got to save, if needs be, from herself. He is taught to take care of his own virtue; he is never taught that chastity is just the law of service which he must keep to for the sake of others, for the sake of those who bear the same sacred weakness, the same gracious dependence on his strength as his own mother and sisters. In one word, he has

to fight the terrible battle in the weakness of the old law of self-restraint, the old 'Thou shalt not;' not in the strength of the new commandment of love. Which of us does not know that the old law 'Thou shalt not,' is weak through the flesh? Which of us does not recognise that the source of man's sin is the self in him which sets itself up as an end to itself; that so long, therefore, as his eyes are fixed on himself, even though it be on his own virtue, or his own goodness, he is and must be, in the reason of things, fatally weak? And that, therefore, Christ placed the fulcrum that was to lift up man's nature, outside himself in the principle of faith, and made that fulcrum rest not on self-virtue, but on love—love to God, and love to his fellow-man,—something, as we say, that takes him out of himself? Which of us has not felt a sin, that we have gone on carelessly yielding to when only our own character was at stake, become impossible to us, when we were made to realise that it involved injury to another, love overcoming where virtue was weak? I say it is no wonder that men are weak and selfish with such weapons as we provide them with in the conflict with evil in them-

selves. Christianity would be false, the gospel a lie, if they could so overcome.

I would, therefore, beseech every mother, for the sake of her own boys, not to remain any longer in sinful ignorance as we have hitherto been content to do, but to face this subject; never to send a boy unwarned and unarmed to a public school. I would entreat you not to leave this vital point to a father's influence; remember that in your own womanhood you have a potent weapon of defence for your boy, which no man can have. See that he knows all he ought to know from pure lips, and not have to gather it from the impure talk of schoolboys, innocent curiosity being too often the source of much evil. Teach him from his earliest years the sacredness of his body, that it is a temple of the Holy Ghost, not his own to do what he likes with, but subjected to certain physical and moral laws imposed by an Infinite Will, the violation of which must lead to its derangement, and to ill results which must fall on others, as well as himself; for never let him think he can sin and suffer alone; and entreat him never to indulge in actions and talk which he would be ashamed for you to know

of, or which he knows would bring a blush to his sister's cheek. Teach him that the moral laws are just as certain in their action as the law of gravity, or any other physical law; never teach him that a thing is wrong merely because the Bible says it is, but that the Bible says it is wrong because, as the violation of moral law, it will bear evil fruit to himself and others; that he cannot indulge in so much as impure thoughts without a certain amount of physical derangement, which in its turn will react upon him, and tempt him to harm others by talk or deed.

Above all, I would beseech you to inculcate in your boys an enthusiasm of womanhood, a sense that a woman, ay, even a sinful, degraded woman, is God's trust to a man, that chastity is that by which he fulfils this trust before God, that by which he becomes a fountain of life and home happiness, breaking which he sinks into a destroying devil. Bring him up as much as possible from his earliest years in a position of trust towards his sisters. Little things, such as his sisters being sent out for a walk, or to a party under his care; little habits taught of jumping up to get them a chair, instead of leaving them to get

it themselves; little acts of respectful consideration inculcated to the maid-servants in the house, all go to form an habitual attitude of mind, which in after years will make it simply impossible for him ever to degrade or dishonour a woman.

Do not let any one delude you into fearing lest you should lose influence with your sons, that it will sully you in their eyes, as some mothers say, 'if you meddle with the subject.' On the contrary, you will gain an influence such as you have never known before. I have come to the deliberate conclusion—the result of much experience, my own and others—that one of the greatest hindrances to men's respecting us women—and that, too, even with men of the world, whom you would have thought had never felt at all on the subject—is the heartless, cruel indifference we maintain towards our lost sisters, the helpless, hopeless, Christless attitude we have assumed as befitting our purity. Where this is abandoned, where it is replaced by womanly compassions, by the divine mother of the sad, the lost, and the sinful, which is in every woman worthy of the name, it is just like a new revelation of womanhood to men.

Believe me, young men will respond to this higher teaching. They are often thoughtless about themselves, but till the world and the world's ways have hardened them, they are never wanting in generosity. A young man may be made to feel the hideous meanness of the bargain he makes, retaining his own social advantages, his friends, his refinements, all the bright prospects of his life, and leaving the curse of his wrongdoing to fall upon the woman, making her an outcast from God and man, cutting her off from the hope of wifehood and motherhood, exposing her to frightful disease, to live a degraded life, and die a dishonoured death. What he has not felt wrong when his thoughts were fixed upon himself, will become nothing short of moral murder to him when his thoughts are fixed on woman and her good. The old knightly manhood will yet be seen amongst us, that reverence for womanhood, which, to a man, is as 'fountains of sweet water' in the bitter sea of life, to keep him 'a living soul.'

CHAPTER IV.

AND now let me endeavour to give you some suggestions as to the objects of an Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, and how best to do the work of visitation connected with it.

First, as to the general objects. Let it be a fundamental rule of every such association that it exists to attack causes, not merely to cure results; not merely, as Mrs. Vicars says, to undo the few last soiled links of an interminable chain. I would suggest, therefore, that all the members should not necessarily be required to undertake the work of visitation, but all alike should be bound to work in their own rank, in one or all of the many ways open to us—by distributing suitable publications, and using our own living, personal influence, beginning with our own immediate circle of friends, and working outwards as fresh channels open; by endeavouring to influence the young men with whom we have to do; by befriending any we may hear of as alone in professions or in business in

the place where we live, and opening our houses to them,—for how many a young man has been driven to seek the society of women in questionable ways, who would have been saved by the friendship and kindly interest of a pure woman; above all, by trying to enlighten and impress *young mothers*. My own invariable experience has been, once get a mother to face the facts, once get the horror of it all into a mother's heart, and as a rule she never fails to turn out her boys as pure as her girls. Much, too, might be done, by the members of an Association, in quietly and earnestly stirring up ministers and preachers, and high-minded men, no longer to blink this terrible question, but to come forward boldly, as Père Hyacinthe and M. Monod have already done, and endeavour to influence young men. And I would specially urge that we should never lose an opportunity of pointing out to such men where we feel the radical defect in the teaching of men lies, that the teaching of purity is based at present on ideals, not on facts, on self-virtue, not on a regard for others, inculcated as some lovely abstract quality, at which they have to aim for the good of

their own souls, not enforced as a necessity based on the facts of physiology and their relations to the world they live in. And let us beseech all who speak on this subject to young men, no longer to appeal only to the self-restraint which is weak, but to the generosity which is strong in them; no longer to fix their thoughts on themselves, their own virtue, their own character, their own personal dignity, but to direct their attention to the unutterable consequences that their wrongdoing bears to women, and the curse it is bringing on others; and if there be a spark of manliness, a spark of generosity left, to shame them out of being participators in it. For my part, I believe that most young men might be brought to feel, like some I know, that they would rather die than have art or part in this great woman's curse.

I can only state again, with Mrs. Vicars, that this general work in our rank is of far greater importance even than rescuing the poor victims of our social evils. Till we get rid of the self-righteousness, and the selfish isolation of our homes and family life, which has so eaten into the heart of our Christianity, till we get something

better and more Christ-like than the goodness which is so busy taking care of itself that it has no time to take care of others, the interminable chain must go on growing, no progress can be made to a better state of things.

But now, with regard to the practical work of visitation, I should suggest that a list of the houses needing visitation should be obtained from either the parochial clergy or the police; and as the Association increases in numbers, be apportioned out among the workers, progress being reported at the monthly meeting for prayer and counsel.* It is best that no lady should go alone, at any rate, till she is known.

A respectable shop, however, in the bad districts will give all the information needed to begin with.

In the next place, with regard to the best time for visiting. The morning has great advantages,

* If a certain number of ladies can be got together to meet us, one or two of our Association would gladly attend, and endeavour to interest them in the work, and help start it; only one proviso being made, that we may be allowed to fix the time, as our hands are very full.

and generally we prefer it. The girls are quieter and more sober, and it is easier to get a quiet talk with them one by one, often before they are up. On the other hand, the doors are more often locked in the morning; in the afternoon they are always open, and access therefore is easier. But whichever time we choose, both day and hour must constantly be changed, else the landlady learns to expect us, and to take precautions against our effecting an entrance.

Before starting, it is a rule in our Association that there should be earnest prayer. If you are content to go into this work in the ordinary prayerful frame of mind in which we go to other work, you will find yourself simply paralysed by the force of evil around you. Indeed, to gain real power in coping with the evil that meets us—the overcoming love that fainteth not, neither is weary, the loving earnestness that can plead with the first girl it meets, as if there were no other lost soul in the world but that one—we find it absolutely necessary to remain in silent prayer up to the last moment, and so step out of the presence of the great Father into the

presence of these His wandering children, who, like lost sheep, have erred and gone astray.

Having fixed upon the house to be visited, do not knock at the front door,* but go boldly in

* With regard to the upper class of dens which possess a locked front door, and a servant to open it, and to which these directions do not therefore apply, we have as yet no experience. To find entrance into them does indeed require tact and care. I should suggest all the formalities of a regular call being observed; to dress in one's very best, and to send up one's card, having, if possible, obtained the name, but if not, asking for the lady of the house, and stating that one calls on business; and then having once got in, trusting to kindness, and tact, and simple human friendliness to gain a footing. One has always some sense of loneliness resulting from the feeling of being looked down upon, to work upon. Anything like preaching would of course be out of the question; deep womanly compassion, the tender, human-hearted 'Christ in us,' that beauty of the Lord our God upon us which drew all classes of sinners to Him, must do the work here, speaking to them not as a class of sinners apart, but as those who, like us, have wandered from their Father; they in one way, we in another, as those who have tasted the nothingness of human love, and whose hearts want that 'place of rest imperturbable where love is not forsaken if itself forsaketh not,' who need, like us, a Saviour and a Friend. In cases where our visit excites anger, or is resented as an impertinent intrusion, a little gift of flowers

if the door is not locked, and knock at the door of one of the upstair rooms ; for be it remembered, these houses have not the rights of private houses ; they are illegal, and, strictly speaking, have no rights at all. In this way you will probably not meet the landlord or landlady ; but if you do, do not pass them by as if there was no Saviour for them—remember that somewhere, hidden away from all eyes but His, is a soul athirst even unto death for the water of life, unhappy in its vileness, but never hearing a kind word — and boldly give the message of the Father's pardoning love. If neither Jew nor Mahommedan will ever tread on a bit of paper, lest the name of God be written upon it, may we Christians never trample on a human soul, however vile, remembering that it was made in the image of God, and that Christ has written His name in His own life-blood upon it.

Of course, in many cases you must be prepared for a perfect torrent of abuse.

If the owner of the house be a man, look him

the next day, accompanied with a kind note, might open the door again for further intercourse. What an untried field of labour lies open here to anyone who would attempt it!

quietly and firmly in the face: a man finds it very hard to go on insulting a lady when she is looking straight at him; and as soon as there is a pause, ask him quietly and gently, 'If you had a sister or a daughter in one of these houses, wouldn't you like a lady to come and be a friend to her? Well, then, these poor girls are some man's sisters, some mother's children; don't grudge them a friend in me.' Firmness and gentleness, with some such appeal to better feelings, will often do wonders. Anyhow, let us, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, endure hardness, and bear abuse and insult gladly for Him who bore to be called a devil and a drunkard for us. Cannot He turn it to our advantage? In the Crimean war a cannon-ball pierced the side of the hill where our troops were encamped, and without injuring any of our men, it shattered the rock and let out a secret spring, which for many months afforded our soldiers a supply of fresh, living water. And so, when in the deadly fight with evil we are struck by cruel insult, it strikes not us only, but Him; and forthwith from the smitten Rock there gush forth streams of living tenderness: 'I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that

thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?' 'Fear not, thou art mine, I will hold thee by thy right hand;'—living streams that flow out, not only for us, but so often for the poor sinful soul who has injured us. Once it did happen to Mrs. Vicars to be most grievously insulted in one of these dens to which she had gone alone. Undaunted by the cruel pain it gave her, the brave heart went again two days after; she found the woman in an agony of repentance, and not only was her own heart opened, but she thankfully allowed Mrs. Vicars to take her daughter and one of her lodgers to a Home.

On another occasion, in one house they visited, there was a girl who greeted Mrs. S. and her friend with such a torrent of coarse abuse every time they came, that it really seemed of no use to persevere in the face of insults that pained like a blow. Once or twice the door being shut in their faces, Mrs. S. pleaded with her through the open window, but always with the same ill-success.

'Don't let us give her up; let us try some flowers.' Accordingly the next time her friend made up a lovely nosegay of white azaleas and scar-

let geraniums, and fastened round it the divine words, 'Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

'Oh, what beautiful flowers! Well, now, that is nice!' exclaimed the girl, evidently touched at the kindness of the little gift in return for all her coarse abuse.

Weeks passed away, when Mrs. S., sitting in the little reception-room of the Albion Hill Home, was told a young person wanted to be admitted. The door opened, and in walked this very girl. For the moment Mrs. S. did not recognise, in the gentle face and imploring manner, the rude, defiant occupant of the den she and her friend had so often visited in such despair. 'I don't think you know me, ma'am. I'm Lizzie, and hope you will forgive me for all the bad things I said when you came to see me. Indeed, I never meant them. If you will forgive me and take me, I want to come into the Home. And please, ma'am, I have brought a friend with me.'

Yes, there she was, humbly asking for admit-

tance into the Home she had so often vowed nothing should induce her to enter, and already saving others.

'But what has changed you so, my girl? How has it all come about?' Mrs. S. asked, in amazement.

'It was the flowers that lady brought me, and the beautiful text. Them words, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow," went to my heart.'

Soon after another of Lizzie's companions was admitted. On being told, she clasped her hands and exclaimed joyously, 'Thank God!' Her heart, once so hard and degraded, had already learned to sing with the angels over one lost one found.

On gaining access to a den, our whole efforts must be directed to getting any girl who may be impressed to come away with us at once—'Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.' Make an appointment with her some other day, because it does not suit your convenience to take her away just then, or allow an unseasonable hour, or a feeling of fatigue to interfere with providing for her, if

she comes up to your house, and you have almost certainly lost her. Earnestness and promptness are essential in this work. If they refuse to come away at once, never omit leaving your address, so that if they want a friend at any hour of the day or night, they may know where to find one. In this way our own homes form so many Houses of Mercy, where poor, friendless and fallen girls who have wandered into Brighton can come to find a friend; and surely this is what every pure home ought to be: its door, a gate called Beautiful, where the feet of the lame and the lost receive strength to seek again their Father's face, and the homeward path.

'But where am I to take them, if they are willing to be rescued?' This, of course, is one of the first difficulties to be solved, as, if one has young servants, one cannot bring them to one's own home. It has been the subject of much anxious discussion between Mrs. Vicars and myself, and our deliberations have resulted in some modifications of our earlier suggestions. The best plan would be for the Association to find out two or three Christian women who would undertake to lodge

and board a girl whilst further arrangements were being made for her. Do not undertake the expense of a temporary refuge, but if there is no local Home let your whole efforts be directed towards having a Cottage Home of your own, to which you can send the girls you rescue. This had better be built in connexion with some existing centre, where the work of training is understood and the methods are good. This will result in a great saving of expense, as the Cottage Home would share in the common laundry premises, chapel, chaplain, lady superintendent, &c. It would also present the advantage of placing a girl in altogether fresh surroundings, and removing her from old scenes of temptation. If isolated Cottage Homes are built whenever an Association if formed, not only do these old scenes present a greater temptation to go back to the old lawless life, but there would be a want of the appliances for training any but a very small number; and also there is the fear of great inexperience in the ladies who manage it, and consequent bad results, ending by the work being given up in disgust.

Only before fixing on a Centre, I would warn

every Association to gain a personal knowledge of its methods. Let us bear in mind that these poor children have mostly never known a real mother's care, and that what they pre-eminently want is a home and a mother, and cheerful, natural, thorough home training in domestic service ; that no other training answers ; and that when, therefore, the methods are so ecclesiastical as to interfere with the bright, loving *home* character of the training, I would urge every Association to have nothing to do with them, but to have their own local Cottage Home, and manage it as best they can. Any 'best,' as long as it is human and loving, answers better than ascetic discipline with this class of girls.

But perhaps you will say, to have such a Cottage Home would cost a good deal of money, and you are 'such a bad beggar.' I beseech you, *have faith in God.* Believe, at least, that in the richest country in the world no soul need be lost for want of money to save. If a soul is lost, it is not from want of money, but from want of faith. When are we going to begin to believe in Christianity, to believe in what Our Lord says, that faith can move mountains and pluck up strong-rooted

trees, that in *the line of God's will* we are practically omnipotent? When shall we realise that an Almighty power, like the great forces of nature which are also His, stands ready, waiting for our use? Some years ago Miss Robinson was bewailing to me the state of Portsmouth, that our soldiers had no place of refuge from the thousand gin-palaces and public-houses to which they were asked even before they could disembark; but that the evil was so enormous, it could only be met on a national scale, and it seemed hopeless to try and meet it in the face of so many difficulties. We had both of us shown a remarkable inability to raise money, we were emphatically what people are so proud of declaring themselves, 'bad beggars.' But we knelt down, and asked our God in faith to help us to do the right thing, and save our soldiers. The answer to that prayer was 15,000*l.* And don't you think that the few hundreds you may need for saving your lost sisters will be given you, if you too ask in faith, not doubting in your heart, but believing that those things you ask shall come to pass? It is not in the line of God's will that we should interfere with the laws of nature, and work

idle wonders by removing material mountains, or plucking up material trees; the divine Power by which faith works is but the divine Will in action; the very condition of its use, as in the use of one of the forces of nature, is obedience to law. But it must be in the line of God's will, Who wills that all men should be saved, that the mountain of sin and difficulty should be moved off some despairing heart, crushed down by it into degradation; that evil habits, the growth of years, and deep-rooted as the great Eastern sycamines, or our own English oaks, should be plucked up and cast into the depths of the sea. Have faith in God and you shall do it. Let us say with St. Theresa, when she set to work to establish a much-needed House of mercy with only three half-pence in her pocket, 'Theresa and three half-pence can do nothing, but God and three half-pence can do all things.' Remember to begin with, that the purse is an organ that lies next the heart, not the head, and commence by trying to excite an interest in the subject, and get at the feelings. Send a copy of *Work among the Lost*, or *Work in Brighton*, or anything else that you know of that has interested you, to those

who have the means of giving. Convince people that there is a practical need, by telling them of cases you have already got under your care, and the makeshifts to which you are reduced in trying to fulfil your trust. And above all, get the co-operation of well-judging people whose names inspire trust, and you will soon find that money can be got for any good purpose in England.

A Cottage Home can be built for from £650 to £700, and when once erected can be made nearly self-supporting, so that the Association would not have any very heavy burden in raising the necessary sums in annual subscriptions. The Albion Hill Home has ground belonging to it sufficient for four or five such Cottage Homes, each bearing the name of the town to which it belongs. There would be no massing bad girls together, as each cottage would be kept perfectly distinct, and they would only meet all together at chapel ; the moral effect of which would be only good, as showing how many were anxious to do better.

In addition to this more methodical plan, I would earnestly suggest that any lady whose heart has been touched by the sufferings and degrada-

tion of women, and who, though not perhaps wealthy, has still with care and self-denial two or three hundred a-year to spare, should undertake a Cottage Home of her own, in which she would maintain and train a few of these lost and wandering children, either living with them herself or placing them under the care of a good Christian woman, and watching over them daily. An ordinary house could be readily adapted for the purpose, and fitted up with the proper dormitory arrangements; laundry and machine-work would contribute materially to its support. One or two of the steadier girls might be trained as cooks at the lady's own house, should she not live with them, or the cooking connected with a 'sick kitchen' might be undertaken. Are there no mothers who, having seen their own children grow up in pure and sheltered girlhood, and become happy mothers in their turn, will now care for a few of those who have 'no home and no happiness,' and who too often have lost, or never known, a mother's love?

But in the practical work of visitation it is unquestionably a great help to have some intermediate link between the Home and the dens; such as

boarding out with a Christian woman would afford, or such as the Cottage Refuge we have built on purpose presents. Often a girl, owing to the causes I have already touched upon, has an insuperable objection to entering a Penitentiary. In that case we can say, 'I am not asking you to go into the Home, but to leave this vile life, and come with me to a little lodging we have built for you.' Once out of her evil surroundings she can see things with other eyes, and is generally the first to ask for admission into the Home she had so dreaded.

The Cottage Home, too, is invaluable in the cases of prevention, which form so blessed a feature of our work, and which in themselves plead for the existence in all our large towns of some such Association as ours. Strangers and very young girls are too often entrapped into houses of bad character. One case that came under our care was the most unhappy wife of an unfaithful husband. Unable to live with him any longer, she had arrived at Brighton late one evening, alone, and friendless, and penniless. She went to the police-station to ask to be directed to a respectable lodging for the

night, but received for answer that the station was not a lodging-house, and she must go elsewhere for information. A woman, apparently taking pity upon her, came forward and offered to take her in for the night; an offer which was eagerly accepted, only to find out later on the nature of the house into which she had been beguiled. She had been there only two days, being too poor at once to seek another lodging, and not knowing where to turn, when two of our visitors came upon her. She naturally resented the thought of going into a Penitentiary: 'What have I done that I should go to a place like that, as if I had lost my character?' she exclaimed indignantly. But on being told of the Cottage Home she thankfully agreed to go to it the next day. But at half-past ten that same night she made her appearance at the door of the lady who had visited her, and who had taken care, as we always do, to leave her address. Her landlady, finding out she was likely to lose her, had endeavoured to force her to lead an evil life; and she had escaped to the friend she knew would save her. Miss J., regardless of the late hour and the inclement night, at once walked up to the Cottage

with her, roused the household, and the poor friendless wanderer was at once admitted. 'I was a stranger and ye took Me in.' She confessed afterwards that she had fully made up her mind to throw herself into the sea.

Another case was that of a young servant girl, who, owing to some dispute, was suddenly dismissed from her place, weak and ill from overwork. With that incredible carelessness of some mistresses which at the last day will lay the sin of so many of these poor wanderers at their door, she was turned off without a thought or a question as to what would become of her. She trailed herself wearily through several streets seeking a respectable lodging in vain, and at last was directed, I am shocked to say by a policeman, to William Street. In perfect good faith she paid five shillings in advance for her lodging, discovering, when it was too late, the nature of the house. She was too ill and too poor to seek another lodging, and could only lie still and pray that God would send her some friend. Falling into a troubled doze, she was awakened by the kind voice and touch of two ladies standing by her bedside. An angel of God could

not have been more welcome and more unexpected. In ten minutes she was up and dressed, and being conveyed in a fly to a place of safety.

But besides this chance work of prevention, if I may so call it, every association should be doing a steady work of prevention in hunting up little girls, in bad localities, just past the School-board age, the conditions of whose lives are so bad as simply to set them apart for ruin in body and soul—children, in South's terrible words, 'not so much born as damned into the world.' No country is so fearfully and culpably careless about the chastity of her female children as England. Other countries recognise, at least, nominally, in their statute-books, the legal age, twenty-one, as the earliest at which a girl can give herself to vice without the consent of her legal guardians. But at any age little English girls can drift into a den before they are in the least old enough to understand the consequences of their own actions, dashed down this moral precipice before they know how to choose the good and refuse the evil; and there is no law by which we can make it felony up to a certain age, and misdemeanour for a year beyond it,—misdemeanour

in the den-keeper to have harboured such a child for such a purpose. In default, therefore, of any protection from the law, any recognition of the minority of children for the purposes of vice, we save them in one of three ways :—

1. By getting them clothes and placing them out at service. This, however, is only possible occasionally, as in general they are too untrained to keep a situation when they get it.

2. By placing them with a Christian woman, who will train them for five shillings a-week, in her own house for a few months, and draft them on into a respectable situation.

3. By placing them in a training school, which is the most efficient, but also the most expensive way. Thence they are turned out well-trained and respectable servants, able to take really good situations, while they are removed from their old bad associations.

In this way when Ladies' Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls are formed in every large town, multitudes of girls will be saved from worse than death ; and multitudes of young men saved from ever knowing them as their worst tempters.

And I would especially point out, that our 'Girls' Friendlies,' admirable as they are, only help respectable girls. By one of the fundamental rules, they cannot help those that most want helping to save them from a downward course. They emphatically need supplementing by our Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls, and then we shall form one golden chain of love bound about our unprotected working-class girls, to save them from ever falling a sacrifice to that terrible social Moloch so largely kept up, alas! by the wealth of our own class.

In order that women in our own rank, who can guard their own little girls from every breath of evil without, may realise what are the conditions but too often of these poor children whom we leave to perish in our back streets, let us take one case. Two of us ladies passing down Derby Place met a very pretty child of thirteen or fourteen paddling down the muddy flags with her bare feet, and roughly told to get along by a policeman—an injunction which she greeted with a familiar laugh. Taking her kindly by the hand, we led her back to what she called her home,—a common lodging-house,—

and found that her mother, a drunken Irishwoman, sold flowers, and left this pretty girl alone with a lot of low men in the lodging-house all day, and with absolutely no employment. A motherly-hearted woman connected with the lodging, who is one of our best allies and fellow-workers, implored us to do something for her, as she was fast going to ruin. The girl was almost naked, and the first step was evidently to clothe her for service; so she was told to come up that same evening to my house. Very shy and silent she sat while a heap of cast-off clothing was being turned over to see what would do for her, till at last she could contain herself no longer, and burst out, 'My heart do so jump for joy at the sight of such beautiful things.' They were only old clothes, the cast-off things of other girls as fair and young as Mary, but born to a brighter lot; girls who, if mothers would only bring them up to feel that that brighter lot is a trust for other girls, a store of wholesome life-giving sunshine to spend on some sad young heart, whose pleasures—the dancing-saloon and the street—are sadder even than its griefs, might have cared for this neglected child. Is there anything so pathetic in

life as the little, the very little, that will make a human 'heart jump for joy?'

'And yet
We do refuse, neglect, forget,
To give that little ere 'tis fled,
Ah, me! Ah, me!
And sad hearts go uncomforted.'

Poor little Mary! after two or three hours' experience of my peaceful Christian home, she sat on the area-steps crying bitterly, and sobbing out, 'It was so dreadful to go back to all that drinkin' and fightin'.' So finding that she was cruelly beaten, I took her into my own home, my excellent Christian servants offering to cleanse and clothe her. She was literally alive from head to foot with vermin, her tender girlish body was scarred all over with blows, apparently inflicted with a poker, and one of her arms bore the marks of her mother's teeth, where, in her drunken fury, she had severely bitten her; and her voracious appetite showed she had been half starved. I ask, under such conditions, untrained and unemployed, what chance had she but to swell the ranks of the lost,—lost in body and soul through our selfish isolation in our pure and

comfortable homes, that leaves the children in our back streets to perish in a living death? These, or something like these, are the conditions which have beset many of the poor girls on whom we too often sit in judgment as 'poor degraded wretches,' and refuse to go, like the good Samaritan, where they are, lest *we* should be insulted and defiled. Does a vision *never* come to us that the self-righteousness and cruelty that can thus use the unmerited gifts of God,—our pure homes, our modest sleeping apartments, our sheltered circumstances, all our lovely influences,—use them to condemn instead of to save, not to lift up them that are bowed down, but to spurn them when down,—that this self-righteousness and cruelty of ours may be worse in our Lord's sight than the sin of our lost sisters? And that if we will go forth to them in His strength, 'loving, not loathing,' they may save us from more than we can save them?

Little Mary was ultimately placed in a school at Norwood, and is doing well. She was found to have been born and baptized a Roman Catholic; and as she did not wish to give up her religion, and so separate herself from her only respectable

relative, a young brother, who is also doing well at a training-school, some Catholic ladies took the charge of her. We are thankful to be able to add, that owing to this sad case, the Catholics have since established a little training-school in Brighton for their destitute girls, who, owing to their religion, cannot be taken into our Protestant schools, the priests refusing in all cases to give them up.*

But in work that is not prevention, but cure, let me give you one word of earnest caution. It may be that you will have to work for weeks and see no fruit. But it may be that you will rescue such large numbers that it will be a sore difficulty and perplexity to know what to do with them. Do not, I beseech you, yield to what will then be a strong temptation, to send them out at once into service. I know there are some who act on this system, and state that the results are satisfactory. But I contend that the evil that must result is of such a secret kind as not easily to be detected.

* See a little penny tract called *Ladies' Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls*: being an account of the Work in Brighton. We should be grateful if ladies would inclose a copy of it in their letters, and so help to make the work known.

The first thing an unreclaimed woman will do is to corrupt the minds of the boys of the family, if there are any. I do not speak from conjecture, but from facts that have come under my own notice. In another case that I know of, a woman whose past history it is a shame even to think of, has been introduced as a nursery governess into a private family without the unfortunate mother knowing the circumstances of her past life. Now I say, better a thousand times that this fearful social disease should be localised in certain spots, which we call dens, than that by our hasty and injudicious benevolence it should be struck into the very bosom of our families. Indeed the prayer that 'lovers of the lost' need most constantly, is that beautiful collect of our Church, 'Grant us by the help of the same Spirit a right judgment in all things.' The evil we contend against is full of sorrowful confusions; and is emphatically the Medusa's head in life, apt to turn either one's love or one's judgment to stone.

I believe myself that the true principle is to recognise, with Mrs. Vicars, that these girls have sinned, and to exact, if possible, some proof of repentance, some penalty, such as going for a time to

a Home,* which will mark the distinction between a girl who has gone astray, and another who has resisted the same temptations, remembering that justice is ever the back-bone of mercy.

Great care, as has been already said, must be taken in the choice of a Home, the little book, *Work among the Lost*,† now existing as a guide. Of course, in having the Albion Hill Home to do the work well and effectually of training those whom we rescue, we have an unspeakable advantage; but why should there not be many Albion Hill Homes? Much might be done

* I do not know whether it is necessary to notice Mrs. Butler's objection in her *Hour before the Dawn* to our penitentiary system. That it is capable of great improvement I should be the first to admit; but she urges the folly and injustice of herding these girls together as a class in a way we should certainly not do with immoral young men. But she seems to overlook the fact that we do not make them a class, they *are* a class by themselves. All we do is to make use of an existing distinction for the ultimate purpose of being able with safety to break it up, and disperse these girls through the community.

† *Work among the Lost*, 1*s.* 6*d.*, 16th edition. (Hatchards.) I need scarcely say that the profits of this little book go to the Albion Hill Home.

by an united effort in remodelling a local Home that neglects, as too many do, some of the most fundamental principles worked out by Mrs. Vicars. Especially is this the case in the arrangement of the dormitories, on which Mrs. Vicars lays the most absolute stress. In one newly-erected Home the dormitory is one long room with a number of beds arranged side by side, no partition, no curtain even, to secure privacy and decency; the washing basins ranged down one side of the room in full view; no supervision; nothing to prevent obscene talk going on half the night, and every facility offered to the last comer to undo what progress had been effected in reclaiming the others. In Mrs. Vicars' Home, on the contrary, each bed is inclosed in a partition running up some eight feet, so as to allow free ventilation at the top. Each compartment has its own door, the outside bolt of which the matron slips when the girls retire to rest; or if this is objected to, rolling doors will answer the same purpose. Each little room thus formed has its own snowy little bed, its own washing-stand, its pretty picture and illuminated text, its brush-and-comb-bag, all as bright and

neat and pretty as possible. Those who have had any practical experience of the visitation of dens will know how absolutely necessary these arrangements are for effecting any reformation, and forming habits of womanly modesty, neatness, and cleanliness. It is no use urging that this arrangement takes up too much room. After five-and-twenty years' experience, Mrs. Vicars has found it is the only effective one; and she would say that we had better do our work thoroughly, at the cost of some apparent result of numbers, since only thorough work will stand. When shall we realise that, in merely massing a number of bad girls together, we have done *nothing* towards their reformation? Too often we first neglect the most fundamental principles of reformatory work; and then, when we reap the fruit of our own bad work, we turn round on these poor children, and say in disgust that they cannot be reclaimed.

When once you have got a girl safely housed in a Home, do not forget her. Do not make her feel by your conduct that you have committed her to a grave. Visit her now and then, if possible, and give her the help of your kindly

interest and sympathy; write her a few words of cheery encouragement, send her a little gift or an illuminated card. Such a trifle pleases these poor children. Many a girl would have gone bravely through her time of probation and training, if only one heart in the great outside world had remembered her.

But many cases will not need a Home. Many are received home by their parents or friends; some marry, the presence of pure-minded women amongst them acting in a variety of health-giving, light-bringing ways.

One other practical difficulty I must touch upon, though it is one to which no satisfactory solution is possible. Most of these girls owe rent. But rent is *not* the only, nor even the chief, profit which the keepers of these dens make out of these poor girls, which accounts for the fact of their being allowed to be in such heavy arrears, when, in a common lodging-house, they would be turned out at once. This fact must always be remembered in estimating this claim. At the same time if we refuse to recognise it at all in rescuing a girl, the houses are almost closed against us. There is no

right in wrong. All one can do is to compromise matters. If the girl has nothing of her own that can go towards liquidating it, we generally agree to pay a part of the debt, and with this the owner of the house is usually content.

Besides our regular visitation, we find an occasional meeting, with a good deal of hymn-singing and one or two stirring religious addresses, is very necessary, and often makes the hidden seed, that has been sown in many an earnest private talk, spring up and bear fruit. We find the best way of accomplishing this is by a breakfast at 12 o'clock, and plenty of hot coffee, the tickets having been previously distributed in visitation. This plan has several advantages over Midnight Meetings, valuable as they have proved: it does not try the health of the workers so much; it does not involve keeping servants up and deranging one's household; above all, the girls are not excited with drink at that early hour, as they almost always are at Midnight Meetings, and time hangs heavier on their hands. Many ladies shrink from the very thought of a Midnight Meeting; but no one can feel any difficulty in getting up a breakfast

for these poor lost children, and sitting down and eating with them like our Divine Master. Only I would have every lady well prepared for the scene that will offer itself, the shrieks of horrid laughter and the coarse jests which will only too probably answer every earnest appeal—laughter, however, which one learns to recognise as half hysterical, and often had recourse to to hide the inner response of a stricken heart. Often where there has been the most reckless mocking, afterwards there has been the most peaceable fruit of righteousness. But after all is said, the sight of their awful degradation, something so far lower than a man can fall, something that stands so completely alone, must come upon one as a crushing surprise. Let it at least open our eyes to what is the sin, in God's eyes, of our self-righteous 'purity,' which, while children of fifteen and seventeen are being fashioned into consummate devils in our professedly Christian land, has so long passed by on the other side and refused to face this terrible evil lest our purity should be sullied.

The following is a letter, one of many such that we receive, from the mother of a girl who was

impressed at our first breakfast, and who, after being repeatedly visited, at length made up her mind to go home, her whole soul being gradually led to revolt from her evil life. One of our workers herself took her the greatest part of the way home:—

'*Clifton, Nov.* 24, 1876.

'MADAM,

'My child arrived quite safe, and I want to thank you for your great kindness. I cannot thank you enuff for what you have done in sending my child back to me; I felt almost broken-hearted; I have not been able to rest day or night. . . . May the Lord bless you and keep you, and send you a hundred fould for your goodness and kindness to a stranger. I hope it will be a lesson to her. She will not be 18 till next August. She wishes me to tell you how thankful she is to be at home once more. I am sorry I cannot see you to thank you myseaIf. May the Lord bless you in your going out and coming in.

'Believe me, your humble servant,

'ELIZABETH H——.'

Will not some mother in our rank try and realise what it would be to *her* not to know where *her* child was, only to know that she is lost to God and man, and yet be too poor and too tied with the support of a home to be able to go and seek her? Will she not, thinking of some dear girl's face in her own home, which she can always shield from the least breath of evil,—will she not give up an hour or two a-week to the service of those poor mothers whose children, by the mere accident of their birth, are exposed to this fearful fate of being 'drawn unto death,'—a living death that destroys both body and soul in hell?

Do not tell me that you think prevention is better than cure, and therefore that you do not wish to engage in this work. If you want to quicken that principle into a living power amongst us, give and get others to give an hour or two a-week to working among the lost; for if 'prevention is better than cure' is written on your hearts, it is stamped in blood and fire into ours. But why should not our own girls take part of the work off our hands, and help us in prevention? How is it that we so often bring up our girls with the

selfish belief that they were born with a prescriptive right to their social advantages, their graceful culture, the refinement that surrounds them, their rinks and entertainments, and pleasant summer trips, when other girls, as fair as they, and with the same thought in their hearts that they can be young only once in their lives, have to stand year in and year out at the wash-tub, or toil in crowded factories, or in heated work-rooms—girls who go astray and are lost just for the want of a little fun, and brightness, and change? Would not the generosity that is in every young heart respond better to the teaching that they hold all this—their pretty rooms, their bright accomplishments, their high culture—as a trust, to bring a little brightness, and beauty, and higher life into the hard, monotonous, toiling girl-lives around them? My first work, undertaken in much fear and trembling, when I was nineteen, was to ask eight of these respectable girls—chiefly daughters of washerwomen—to come and drink tea with me every Sunday afternoon, and see if I could not be their friend; and I soon found that I could get some of the prettiest, dressiest girls in the place to come to me, because I was a girl like

themselves, and not — with all respect to our maturer selves—an old fogey. What really keeps back many girls from doing the same thing, is that fatal idea which has got into so much of our intercourse with the poor—that it is necessary to preach to them; and girls have much, too much of the gracious modesty of youth willingly to take to that. But if they were taught to feel that what is really needed is simple human fellowship between girls of different ranks, and the sympathy of one young thing for another, how many bright young hearts would come forward, and either by a singing, or a drawing, or an arithmetic class, or even by a simple Bible-class, get into friendly, affectionate, social intercourse with girls without their advantages, sharing their own upward struggles with them, and trying by all sorts of simple devices to bring brightness and helpful influences into their lives! How many a poor girl might be saved by forming a friendship with a girl in a higher rank, who, shielded from her temptations, can give her what she has not got!

And only next to their home influence, I implore women to use their social influence in

defence of desecrated womanhood. As you value the salvation of your sons, as you reverence the womanhood of your daughters, the womanhood that once bore the Divine under its heart, and has been consecrated as the divine Mother to the most sacred uses, never overlook its desecration in a man. I am well aware we cannot constitute ourselves the moral inquisitors of men's private lives. But there are men who are well known as the moral murderers of women, who make no secret of that dastardly cowardice, which, with an unconscious, cutting irony, they are pleased to call 'gallantry;' and that such men are received and courted in society—and this by women—may well make thoughtful men denominate our Christianity a civilised heathenism, rotten to the core. I can only beseech you never to let rank varnish, or money gild over, that indelible stain on a man's character of a woman's blood. Do not call 'gay' what God calls 'cursed.' Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who said of that man who causes His little ones to fall, that it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depths

of the sea. If any man have not the spirit of Christ in this, he is none of His. It may be that you are so placed as to be obliged to have social intercourse with such men, and even receive them under your roof. But was ever a woman at a loss to express her disapprobation and dislike, even in the closest intercourse, or lacking in fine methods of making a man feel it, even whilst she is observing all the outward civilities of society? We all know the uses of ice, that it is perfectly smooth, polished, and—irresistible, having been known to split granite itself. Did women only know what is going on behind the embroidered veil of our civilised life; did they know for themselves the uses to which their womanhood is being put; did they know the facts that we know and cannot utter for very shame, they would soon revolutionise society; and the mother could not be found who, for the sake of rank or money, would sell her pure and innocent girl to a man who has done his best to make her womanhood a vile and desecrated thing.

Only let me ask you if the facts I have laid before you have made any impression on you—and what woman's heart could dare to say they have

not?—do not let it run out of your eyes in a few idle tears, or evaporate from your lips in a few empty sighs, and be as if it had never been; but stamp it in upon your inmost souls by action of some kind. Act on the impression made at once; set to work at once, and try and get a better state of feeling among educated women by distributing copies of this little book among your personal friends, and earnestly discuss it with them; form an Association for the Care of Friendless Girls; even if you cannot work in it yourself, stir up others who can, and give them your prayers. Send a donation, if possible a subscription, to Mrs. Vicars, now she is ill and worn with the burthen of supporting her seventy-seven outcast girls, safely housed, and being carefully trained; send cast-off clothing to the Cottage Home, Albion Hill; above all, consecrate your home and social influence to the cause, which, as Mrs. Vicars says, in the name of Home and Family, ought to be nearest and dearest to our hearts. Do something; fix the feeling by action of some kind. It is no passing impression I want the facts I have laid before you to make upon you, but a life-long change of thought, and view,

and conduct. For of this I am sure, no one can look them in the face and remain the same as before: consecrate or harden they must.

And may there not be locked up in this great world evil, with all its mystery of degradation, misery, and disease, a great force, if we would only set it free, if the Church of the living God would only grapple with this evil, as she has done from the first with slavery; a force constraining us to give ourselves and our children instead of our money, since nothing less will save our perishing sisters; constraining us to recognise the awful sacredness of those functions of our nature which make us life-givers, as well as the terrible curse that living to self must bring to some part of the social organism. In that life of which the smallest details have a divine significance, was it for nothing that, according at least to the tradition of the Church, a repentant harlot was made the messenger of the risen Life to the world?

In conclusion, I make no appeal. The evil is too vast. In the presence of that vast multitude of our lost sisters, women sunk below the beasts that perish, women who can only bear the misery of their life by deadening the pain of it with intoxi-

cants, women who while yet warm and living but too often know the corruption of the grave, what can we do, but with bowed head, and darkened heart, and lips struck dumb for pain, just cast ourselves down at the feet of that one Love which is deeper than our deepest neglect, deeper than our deepest fall, deeper even than our despair?

Our Christ stands in our midst. Once again He shows us His feet and His hands, hands that suppliant show the wounds of His love, dumb mouths that surely plead with us for love and loyalty to the death. Dare we show Him in return unwounded hands and feet, feet that have refused to be pierced in treading sharp and difficult paths of duty, hands that have refused to be wounded in saving others for whom He was contented to be wounded unto death? Once again in the end of the ages, He is willing to make us women the bearers of the risen Life to the world, even that higher life in which impurity, and selfishness, and hate, and destruction, are swallowed up of LOVE. 'Go, tell my brethren,' He says; and shall we not answer, 'Master, here am I; send me'?

At least, let there be no longer in our large

towns a certain number of spots abandoned to the devil, the threshold of which no Christian foot ever crosses, and where large numbers of girls are practically imprisoned from the want of moral courage to effect their own escape. And when our Lord asks us, 'Where is thy sister?' let us no longer have to say, 'I know not;' but even from the dens of our great cities may we be able to answer, 'Here, Lord; and I am with her, striving in Thy strength to be her keeper and preserver.'